U.S. Department of Labor

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DIRECTIVE: REGION 2 PRH SUPPLEMENT NO.   3.13 R2a   (2nd Installment)

TO: ALL REGION 2 CENTER DIRECTORS
             ALL REGION 2 CENTER OPERATORS
             ALL REGION 2 AGENCY CENTER OPERATORS

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SUBJECT: TRAINING ACHIEVEMENT RECORDS (TAR)   IMPROVEMENTS

1. Purpose: To promote retention and ensure that graduates have sufficient entry level skills to obtain and retain valid employment.

2. Background: Region 2 has placed a high priority on making sure that students graduate from the program with the trade skills necessary to obtain and retain meaningful employment, i.e. high paying job training matches. With this priority in mind, the Vocational Taskforce was created. The Taskforce members determined that one of the biggest impediments to students obtaining sufficient trade skills was the "quick completion" facilitated by level "A" TAR completion. It was even felt by some on the Taskforce that the Job Corps policy of paying $750 for an "A" level completion was contributing to poor long-term performance. The taskforce determined that students who leave the program after completing only the "A" level do not have the skills, knowledge, or ability to obtain long term employment.

The Vocational Taskforce decided to reconstruct the TAR's for several trades that had low skill A-level completions by combining different levels into a more comprehensive TAR. A subcommittee of the Taskforce developed the new TAR documents based on an evaluation of the skill levels needed to obtain entry level jobs in the related fields of employment.

The first three TARs the taskforce worked on were Business Technologies, Medical Office Support, and Network Cable Installer. See PRH Supplement No. 3.13 R2a dated October 15, 2004. This supplement represents the second effort. Three more TARs, Computer Service Technician, Information Technology, and Plumbing have been adjusted and/or changed to meet the goal of retaining students long enough to ensure they graduate from the program with the trade skills necessary to obtain and retain meaningful employment.

One of the primary goals for these new TARS is to eliminate an "A" level completion as an *elective choice* for students. At the same time, in order to have a level playing field with other regions, provisions are outlined below that will allow for centers to receive credit for "A" level completions for students who elect to terminate before full completion of the new TAR items.

As a result of this change, students will see a TAR that does not show the current "A" level of completion (which equates to a very low level of skill attainment). They will see, and should be encouraged to attain, skills for specific job titles representing variations within an industry.

3. Changes in Specific TARs: Computer Service Technician, Information Technology, and Plumbing TARs were reviewed and modified to meet the criteria given to the subcommittee. Provision was made for centers to identify the different levels of completion in the expanded TARs to allow for "A" level statistical completions, if necessary.

Computer Service Technician: In order to ensure that job applicants for entry level computer technicians had the skills, knowledge, and abilities for the job, the A+ certification was developed by the Computer Technology Industry Association (CompTIA). CompTIA developed the basic outline of and test for the requirements for jobs in entry level computer technician positions. The test is administered by third party vendors. The test preparation materials are developed by hundreds of vendors, including Realskills, ComputerPREP, MeasureUP, QuickCert, Thompson Learning Co., etc. A center can choose the materials to use in order to best achieve the goal of training the students at that location for becoming a computer technician.

Due to the quickly changing field of computer technology, some of the line items in the TAR for Computer Technical Support have been rendered obsolete such as pre-pentium processors, and some of the DOS commands. The new TAR follows the direct outline of the CompTIA's A+ Certification (2003 objectives). Level 1 directly correlates to the A+ Core (Hardware) test and Level 2 correlates to the A+ OS (Operating Systems) exam. Level 1 is a prerequisite for Level 2. The changes to the attached TAR incorporate relevant line items of the current TAR into new line items, combining some items that need less focus, and dividing some lines items into individual skills that have become more important for a technician to learn. The CompTIA testing objectives were put into place in November of 2003, updating the February 2001 objectives. Because the A+ certification has a structured set of requirements, many resources are available to meet the needs of studying the appropriate material. This eliminates the problem that some centers were having with being able to determine exactly to what depth certain line items must be taught.

A third *optional* level for Network+ certification has been added to this TAR. This TAR level will prepare students for the testing requirements for the CompTIA Network+ certification. This will provide an option to those students who wish to pursue a computer career and advances students to the next logical step. The A+ and Network+ tests together can be substituted for one of the elective tests in both the CNA (Certified Novell Administrator) or MCSA (Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator) certification tracks. This level should only be attempted by those students who have passed his / her A+ certification tests.

Information Technology: This TAR did not have step-off levels; it was one complete TAR which prepared students for jobs in Information Technology. However, since the original development of the TAR there have been significant changes in equipment and terminology. The changes in equipment and terminology have been incorporated into the TAR and have no impact on skill attainment.

In addition, several skills have been added to the TAR. The skill additions are in Section F Application Software Subsection 5 Internet/HTML d, e, f, g. Also there are new additions to Section G dealing with Networks.

The Vocational Committee and the Regional Office felt that these additional skills were important enough to incorporate into the new TAR. Without exposure to the expanded

internet skills and networking, students would not have the ability to get and maintain a meaningful job. These additional skills will be part of the requirement to complete the Information Technology TAR.

Plumbing: There are no longer three separate TARs. Students will see one TAR which will include all three step-offs. Students will be encouraged to complete the total TAR. Centers will continue to receive completion credit for students leaving the program prior to completing the new TAR. The TAR is divided so that the instructor can determine A, B, or C levels of completion when necessary.

Task categories A through E are equal to the JA level.

Task categories A through G are equal to the JB level.

Task categories A through I are equal to the JC level.

Completing the new TAR will insure students attain sufficient skill levels to obtain a meaningful job. The appropriate letter designation training level of completion will be added to the O*NET Code number when the student completes the whole TAR or terminates from the program.

Note: The National Office has reviewed and approved the use of this TAR. In fact, they will be issuing it nationally sometime in the future for use by all trades. When this occurs, there will be only one level of completion for the Plumbing TAR at all centers.

4. Action: Attached to this PRH Supplement are the three TARs in Word format. Centers who offer these trades should make copies for use by the instructors.

Centers should plan to begin using these three new TARs upon receipt of this PRH Supplement, but no later than November 1, 2005. As of September 1st all students enrolled in these vocational training courses shall begin to use the new TARs.

5. Effective Date: November 1, 2005.

6. Inquiries: Should you have any questions regarding the information contained in this supplement, please contact your Government Authorized Representative.

Attachments (3)
    Computer Service Technician
    Information Technology
    Plumbing

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